

POLITICS, HYPOCRISY, AND THE RISE OF GAS PRICES

(Mr. BENTSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, like all Americans I am concerned about the recent rise in gas prices and the effect that it has on consumers and on our industries in this country. I do not know exactly what the answer is, I am not sure that anybody does, but I think it does merit study by this Congress and by the administration.

But I am also concerned, Mr. Speaker, by the hypocrisy that I see Members of this House, of the other body, of the de facto Presidential nominee of the other party, the Republican Party, that after 16 months of being in control they have decided now they want to repeal the gas tax.

Where were they last January? Where were they with their tax bill? Now they have had this midnight conversion, much like the Earth Day conversion on the environment, and all of a sudden they want to repeal the gas tax.

I have been talking about this for awhile. Why did we not take it up before? It is politics, it is politics plain and simple, and unfortunately as the House continues to engage in this activity, the American people suffer.

LET US HOLD HEARINGS ON THE OIL COMPANY SCAM ON THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

(Mr. MARKEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Speaker, gas prices are shooting up at the pump. Meanwhile, the big oil companies have just announced record profits. Gasoline inventories dwindle. Meanwhile, three major refineries announced routine shutdowns on the very same day, last Friday. Pump prices soared 30 cents on oil company speculation. Meanwhile, their Republican defenders in Congress blame a 4-cent tax. The President initiates an investigation and releases reserves. Meanwhile, the Republican Congress sits on its hands. Where are the hearings? People want answers. Why are the oil companies doing this? But all we get is a Republican silence of the lambs.

Mr. Speaker, consumers are in need, and all we get is a Republican fig leaf for the naked greed of the oil companies.

Let us face it. The gas tax is a dry hole. If we want to strike oil, let us pass a windfall profits tax on the money that the oil companies are taking out of the pockets of consumers. They are tipping consumers upside-down and shaking money out of the pockets of these consumers. Let us have Republican hearings on this oil company scam on the American people.

THE TIME IS RIGHT TO DO RIGHT—RAISE THE MINIMUM WAGE

(Mr. LEWIS of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, the time is always right to do right. And raising the minimum wage is the right thing to do.

This is not just an economic issue, Mr. Speaker, this is a moral issue. Hard working people deserve the right to earn a livable wage. The minimum wage is at a 40-year low. No one can live, much less support a family, on \$8,400 a year.

Mr. Speaker, stop playing politics with people's lives. Bring a clean minimum wage bill to the floor. Do not load it up and bring it down with your pet programs.

Mr. Speaker, you have the ability, you have the capacity, you have the power to bring a clean minimum-wage bill to this floor and give people a livable wage.

BLAMING THE GAS TAX ON THE REPUBLICANS?

(Mr. MCINNIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I was just in the House Chambers, and I cannot believe what I just heard in the last few minutes.

I was here 2 years ago, and I voted "no" on the largest tax increase in the history of this country. It was the Clinton tax increase supported by the Democrats in the House of Representatives, not one Republican voted for it, and supported by the Democrats in the U.S. Senate. What did that large tax increase do? It put on the American people and the working people, from what previous speakers have just spoken, the largest tax increase in the history of this country, and I certainly did not see any of these brave speeches, just now given recently in the last few minutes, but some of these Democrats about this onerous gas tax. It is those people right there who put that gas tax on each and every one of us.

People did not have to be rich to get the gas tax put on them. They put a 4½ cent tax on every American that buys a gallon of gas, and today they are trying to get away from it as fast as they can run and somehow do a flip-flop and blame it on the Republicans.

Forget about the partisan politics. Let us talk about the tax.

FOREIGN RELATIONS REVITALIZA- TION ACT SHOULD BE DEFEATED

(Mr. RICHARDSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, SAM GIBBONS is an internationalist, and I

join with many in the tribute to this great legislator.

Today we do not have an internationalist bill on the floor, the Foreign Relations Revitalization Act. It forces the consolidation of agencies, which is the President's prerogative. The levels necessary to conduct foreign policy are just not there. It get involved in China policy when we should basically be staying away. It put restrictions on our relations with Vietnam. It put restrictions on our participation in international organizations. It has severe restrictions on our family planning policies.

Mr. Speaker, this is not a bipartisan bill, it is a partisan bill. It should be defeated. The President's veto should be upheld, and we should not stand for partisanship at a time when our foreign policy should be bipartisan.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CLINGER). Pursuant to provisions of clause 5, rule I, the Chair announces that he will postpone further proceedings today on each motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 4 of rule XV.

Such rollcall votes, if postponed, will be taken after debate has concluded on all motions to suspend the rules, but not before 5 p.m. today.

AMENDING CENTRAL UTAH PROJECT COMPLETION ACT

Mr. HANSEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1823) to amend the Central Utah Project Completion Act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to allow for prepayment of repayment contracts between the United States and the Central Utah Water Conservancy District dated December 28, 1965, and November 26, 1985, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 1823

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. PREPAYMENT OF CERTAIN REPAYMENT CONTRACTS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE CENTRAL UTAH WATER CONSERVANCY DISTRICT.

Section 210 of the Central Utah Project Completion Act (106 Stat. 4624) is amended by striking the second sentence and inserting the following: "The Secretary shall allow for prepayment of the repayment contract between the United States and the Central Utah Water Conservancy District dated December 28, 1965, and supplemented on November 26, 1985, providing for repayment of municipal and industrial water delivery facilities for which repayment is provided pursuant to such contract, under terms and conditions similar to those contained in the supplemental contract that provided for the prepayment of the Jordan Aqueduct dated October 28, 1993. The prepayment may be provided